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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**January 27, 2004**

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### **TWO MEN SENTENCED IN MULTI-STATE ODOMETER TAMPERING SCHEME**

**PHOENIX, ARIZONA** -- Paul Charlton, United States Attorney for the District of Arizona, announced that earlier today, FARAJALLAH (AKA "FRANK") YOUNIS, SR., of El Paso, Texas (6/21/45), and FARAJALLAH (AKA "FRANKIE") YOUNIS, JR., of El Paso, Texas (3/18/65), were sentenced to 30 months and 18 months imprisonment respectively by a federal district judge in Phoenix, Arizona, for their leading roles in an odometer tampering scheme. The defendants previously had pled guilty to five counts each of a 29-count indictment alleging conspiracy (18 U.S.C. § 371), interstate transportation of altered securities (18 U.S.C. § 2314), and the giving of false odometer statements (49 U.S.C. §§ 32705(a)(2), 32709(b)).

In connection with their pleas, FRANK YOUNIS, SR. and FRANKIE YOUNIS, JR., admitted that at least as early as May, 1998, and continuing through at least December 2000, they conspired with others to purchase at least 591 high-mileage, late-model pickup trucks, roll back the odometers on those vehicles to a false low mileage, alter the titles and other paperwork associated with the sale of the vehicles, and sell them to retail dealerships with altered odometers. Most of the vehicles involved in the scheme were purchased from automobile auctions and wholesale used car dealers in Texas, then resold with altered odometers to Arizona residents or automobile dealerships. By misrepresenting the mileage of the vehicles

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to the purchasers, the YOUNISES and their co-conspirators obtained a higher price for the vehicles.

The YOUNISES also were sentenced to 3 years of supervised release each upon completing their prison sentences, and the court ordered them to pay restitution to victims in the amount of \$541,500.

The investigation in this case was conducted primarily by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration and the Arizona Department of Transportation. The prosecution was handled by Alan Phelps and Jeremy Feinstein of the Department of Justice Office of Consumer Litigation.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which estimates that odometer fraud in the U.S. results in consumer losses of at least \$1 billion annually, has established a special hotline to handle odometer fraud complaints. Individuals having information relating to odometer tampering should call (800) 424-9393 or (202) 366-4761. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has the following tips for consumers to guard against odometer fraud :

#### SUGGESTED METHODS TO GUARD AGAINST ODOMETER TAMPERING

- 6        Use a commercially available computer search program that checks for mileage alterations, such as CarFax or VINguard.
- 6        Have an independent mechanic check out the car before purchase.
- 6        Look for loose screws or scratch marks around the dashboard.
- 6        Check to make sure that the digits in the odometer are lined up straight--particularly the 10,000 digit. On General Motors cars, look for silver between the digits -- it should not be there. The area between the numbers should be black.
- 6        Test drive the car and see if the speedometer sticks.
- 6        Check for service stickers inside the door or under the hood that may give the actual mileage.
- 6        Look in the owner's manual to see if maintenance was listed, or if pages that might have shown high mileage were removed.

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- 6      Ask the dealer whether a computer warranty check has been run on the car.
- 6      Ask to see the title documents and look to see if the mileage reading on the documents has been altered.
- 6      Look to see if the steering wheel was worn smooth. Look for other signs of excessive wear on the arm-rest, the floor mats, the pedals for the brakes and gas, and the area around the ignition. If these items were recently replaced, that could also indicate efforts to hide the car's true use and mileage.

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